

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An acidified starch comprising:
from about 0.0001 to about 0.005_weight percent high-intensity sweetener; and an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less;
where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 3 (Original): The acidified starch of claim 2 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 4 (Canceled).

Claim 5 (Currently amended): The acidified starch of claim [4] 1 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The acidified starch of claim 1 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The acidified starch of claim 6 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 8 (Currently amended): A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising:
forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount effective for providing 0.0001 to 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on a total weight of the dough;

forming the dough into desired shapes;

cooking the dough; [and]

contacting the cooked dough with an aqueous composition that includes a food grade acid; and

where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of claim 6 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 10 (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of claim 10 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Currently amended): The method of claim [12] 8 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 8 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 15 (Original): The method of claim 14 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A method of preparing an acidified starch comprising:
forming a dough by combining flour with a water composition in an amount effective for providing 0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on a total weight of the dough;

forming the dough into desired shapes; [and]

cooking the dough in an aqueous composition that includes a food grade acid; and
where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 17 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the aqueous composition includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 18 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Currently amended): The method of claim [20] 16 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 22 (Original): The method of claim 16 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 23 (Original): The method of claim 22 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): A method for reducing acidic flavor in acidified starch, the method comprising contacting a cooked starch with a blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener, wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.005 to 0.2 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend, and an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less; and where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 25 (Canceled).

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes 0.01 to 0.1 weight percent high-intensity sweetener, based on the total weight of the blend.

Claim 27 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 28 (Original): The method of claim 27 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 29 (Canceled).

Claim 30 (Canceled).

Claim 31 (Currently amended): The method of claim [30] 24 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 32 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 33 (Original): The method of claim 32 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 34 (Original): The method of claim 24 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 1 to 7 minutes.

Claim 35 (Original): The method of claim 34 wherein the blend of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener is contacted with the cooked starch in a coating drum for 3 to 5 minutes.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): A method for preparing an acidified starch, the method comprising contacting starch with an aqueous solution of a food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener for a time and temperature effective for cooking the starch, wherein the aqueous composition includes about 0.1 to about 0.5 weight percent food grade acid and from about

0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high intensity sweetener, based on the total weight the aqueous solution; and

where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid and mixtures thereof.

Claim 37 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is cooked at a temperature of from about 90°C to about 100°C for at least about 3 minutes.

Claim 38 (Canceled).

Claim 39 (Canceled).

Claim 40 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 41 (Original): The method of claim 40 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 42 (Previously presented): The method of claim 36 wherein the aqueous solution of food grade acid and high-intensity sweetener includes an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a starch having a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 43 (Canceled).

Claim 44 (Currently amended): The method of claim [43] 36 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 45 (Original): The method of claim 36 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof .

Claim 46 (Original): The method of claim 45 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 47 (Currently Amended): A method of preparing an acidified starch product, the method comprising:

preparing the dough;

cooking the dough;

introducing an effective amount of a food grade acid into the dough or cooked dough;

[and]

introducing a high intensity sweetener into the dough or cooked dough in an amount effective for providing 0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener based on a total weight of the dough or cooked dough;

wherein the effective amount of food grade acid and high intensity sweetener is effective for providing an acidified starch product having microbial stability and without objectionable acid flavor; and

where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 48 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the amount of food grade acid is effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less.

Claim 49 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.

Claim 50 (Original): The method of claim 49 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is sucralose.

Claim 51 (Canceled).

Claim 52 (Currently amended): The method of claim [51] 50 wherein the food grade acid is lactic acid.

Claim 53 (Original): The method of claim 47 wherein the starch is selected from the group consisting of pasta, rice, potato products and mixtures thereof.

Claim 54 (Original): The method of claim 53 wherein the starch is pasta.

Claim 55 (Currently amended): A pasta comprising from about 0.0001 to about 0.005 weight percent high-intensity sweetener and an amount of food grade acid effective for providing a pH of 4.6 or less; and

where the food grade acid is selected from the group consisting of lactic acid, citric acid, phosphoric acid, fumaric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 56 (Canceled).

Claim 57 (Previously added): The pasta of claim 55 wherein the high-intensity sweetener is selected from the group consisting of sucralose, aspartame, saccharin, acesulfame-K, cyclamate and mixtures thereof.